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Farm Broadcasters Letter

United States Department of Agriculture

Office of Communications

Electronic Media Services

Washington, DC 20250-1340

Letter No. 2637

November 19, 1993

SHAPING A NEW FUTURE -- USDA has awarded \$10 million in grants to 28 education and medical organizations to provide telecommunications technology for rural Americans. The grants will be used for equipment to link education and rural community facilities from one rural area to another and to cities. The grants are authorized by the Rural Development Act of 1990. They seek to make available advanced telecommunications and computer networks that provide educational and medical benefits to people living in rural areas, and to improve rural opportunities. Contact: Jim McKenna (202) 720-1260.

CONSERVATION INTO THE NEXT CENTURY -- USDA conducted a public forum in Washington, D.C., November 16 & 17, to develop a national conservation program for the future. The forum assessed the status, conditions and trends of the nation's natural resources on non-federal lands, and the environmental goals of the Soil and Water Resources Conservation Act of 1977. The Act requires that the appraisal be conducted every 10 years. The forum reviewed the challenges for resource management in a changing environment. Previous appraisals set USDA's present soil and water conservation priorities, which focus on erosion control and water quality. The appraisal and national conservation program are to be completed in 1997. Diana Morse (202) 720-4772.

NEW LEADERSHIP AT FOREST SERVICE -- Jack Ward Thomas has been selected to be the 13th chief of the U.S. Forest Service. USDA Assistant Secretary James Lyons says Thomas has a strong research background, leadership skills, and understanding of forest and rangeland ecosystem management principles. Thomas has been with the Forest Service for 27 years. David Unger, who has been serving as acting chief, is named as the new Associate Chief. Secretary of Agriculture Mike Espy also announced plans to restructure the Forest Service law enforcement program to improve its independence during investigations. Contact: Tom Amontree (202) 720-4623.

FARM ACCIDENTS -- Agriculture is one of the most accident-prone industries in the nation. A recent USDA study using Bureau of Labor Statistics shows that the occupational injury rate is 12.3 per 100 workers in production agriculture, compared to 8.3 for all industries. The agriculture fatality rate was 23.8 per 100,000 full-time employees, compared to 4.3 for all industries. The study, "A Review of Farm Accident Data Sources and Research," notes that education, properly planned and executed, holds a great potential for improving farm safety. Contact: Jack Runyan (202) 219-0932.

VEGETABLE VALUES -- The farm value of vegetable production is likely to reach \$11.4 billion this year, mainly on the strength of grower prices for potatoes. Reduced fall production, heavy processing demand, and steadily rising export of processed potatoes will produce rising prices. Both export and import value of vegetables will likely increase this year, remaining positive for the third consecutive year. U.S. vegetable area is up 4 percent this fall, and melon area is 51 percent larger. Contact: Gary Lucier (202) 219-0884.

HIGHER WAGES -- Annual average wage rates paid by farm operators during 1993 were \$6.25 per hour. This compares to \$6.06 during 1992 and \$5.79 in 1991. Contact: Dean Groskurth (202) 690-3228.

FLIGHT OF THE HONEY BEE -- Africanized honey bees have arrived in New Mexico, the third state in which the bees have been found in the United States. The bees first entered the country in 1990 near Hildalgo, Texas, spreading north from Brazil since they escaped in 1957. USDA is working with New Mexico officials to monitor the spread of the bees in the state and to minimize the impact on agriculture and people. USDA has laboratories in Texas, Arizona, Louisiana and Maryland conducting investigations on ways to manage the bees. Contact: Steve Kinsella (202) 720-4623.

POULTRY -- Poultry production in 1994 will increase about 2 percent and prices will be slightly lower than in 1993, averaging 59 to 65 cents per pound. Turkey prices strengthened in the last half of this year due partly to a sharp increase in exports. Turkey returns have been the best since 1986. Broiler production will increase 5 percent in 1994. Record exports have helped support higher wholesale prices. Next year prices and returns are expected to weaken slightly despite continued export strength. Contact: Leland Southard (202) 219-0767.

MISSION TO HUNGARY -- USDA is conducting an agribusiness opportunity mission to Hungary, January 24-28. Areas of interest include equity investment, lease and management of a company, technology transfer, and import/export trade. Another market opening program to Hungary will be conducted in March 1994. Through established joint ventures and other business linkages with Hungarian companies, United States firms can be in a stronger position to gain access to and compete in Eastern European and former Soviet Union markets. Contact: Maria Nemeth-Ek (202) 690-1983.

NOT EVERY DAY -- Eating fish every day of the week can be too much of a good thing. A USDA study shows that such high consumption has the potential to depress the immune function, leaving people more vulnerable to infection. Those people who eat an excess amount of fish would be wise to get adequate levels of anti-oxidant nutrients, such as vitamin E and beta carotene, to counter the effects of fish oil. Contact: Simin Meydani (617) 556-3129.

RURAL DEVELOPMENT -- Rural communities are increasingly developing tourism as a means to improve the local economy. An example of a successful effort to capitalize on local resources is operating in Schuyler, VA. What did it develop to attract tourists? The Waltons Family Museum, featuring replicas of rooms on the TV series "The Waltons," including the living room, kitchen, John-Boy's bedroom, and Ike Godsey's store which doubles as a museum gift shop offering local crafts. Schuyler, a rural community of 400 people in Nelson County, VA, is home to the Walton's creator, Earl Hamner, Jr. The fictional Waltons are largely based on Hamner's real-life family in Depression-era Schuyler. The museum is located in an abandoned school building. Its development was funded by private donations, county funds, and a \$30,000 grant from the Virginia Center on Rural Development. This year the museum provided full and part-time employment for 20 people to serve the needs of the 40,000 visitors during its March to November 28 schedule. Contact: Bill Luhrs (804) 831-2000.

FROM OUR RADIO SERVICE

AGRICULTURE USA #1902 -- John Snyder reviews Washington State's booming apple industry. (Weekly reel -- 13-1/2 minute documentary.)

CONSUMER TIME #1384 -- The right bush in the right place; 'tis the season for sweet potatoes; more low fat dairy products; fax food restaurants; mail order foods. (Weekly reel of 2-1/2 to 3 minute consumer features.)

AGRITAPE FEATURES #1894 -- NAFTA vote outcome; 1994 ARP for feed grains; Canadian wheat imports; U.S. apple and pear exports; world & U.S. cotton outlook. (Weekly reel of features.)

NEWS FEATURE FIVE #1647 -- Boosting taxol production; the economics of taxol; cutting herbicide use; dengue and industrialization; fever prediction. (Weekly reel of research feature stories.)

UPCOMING ON USDA RADIO NEWSLINE -- Monday, November 29, world tobacco situation; Tuesday, November 30, ag prices, ag export outlook, USDA's Outlook Conference; Wednesday, December 1, USDA's Outlook Conference; Tuesday, December 7, crop & weather update. These are the USDA reports we know about in advance. Our Newsline carries many stories every day which are not listed in this lineup. Please don't let the lack of a story listing keep you from calling.

USDA RADIO NEWSLINE (202) 488-8358 or 8359, COMREX ENCODED (202) 720-2545.
Material changed at 5 p.m., EDT, each working day.

FROM OUR TELEVISION SERVICE

FEATURES -- Pat O'Leary reports on USDA's Outlook '94 Conference.

ACTUALITIES -- Agriculture Secretary Mike Espy speaking to farm broadcasters at the NAFB conference in Kansas City, MO; USDA chief meteorologist Norton Strommen on the weather and crop situation; USDA World Board chairman James Donald on crop production.

UPCOMING FEATURES -- DeBoria Janifer reports on Charleston Hot peppers.

EVERY OTHER WEEK -- Agriculture Update with anchors Eric Parsons and Lori Spiczka. 4:30 of USDA farm program information in news desk format with B-roll.

Available on Satellite Galaxy 4, channel 23, audio 6.2 or 6.8, downlink frequency 4160 MHz.: Thursdays from 7:30 - 7:45 p.m., EDT, Saturdays from 10 - 10:30 a.m., EDT, and Mondays from 8 - 8:30 a.m., EDT.

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OFFMIKE

COTTON HARVEST...is not equal to results of the two previous years, says **Jeff Wheeler** (KBOA/KTMO, Kennett, MO). The cotton looked good from the roadside, but harvest results have been less than expected. Moisture for winter wheat is good, and planting is underway. Producers are taking the opportunity to perform fieldwork. Jeff has noticed that several farmers are making the effort to re-grade and level their fields.

CORN HARVEST...has been slowed by wet fields, says **Keith Toper** (KJJQ, Brookings, SD). With the drop in temperatures and high moisture levels, Keith says there may be a significant amount of corn standing in fields next year.

CORN YIELDS...were down 20 percent in **Robert Brown's** (WLBK/WDEK, DeKalb, IL) listening area. Ears were not filled to the ends. Soybeans did well, 45 to 55 bushels an acre. Voters in two counties served by Bob raised taxes this month to finance Cooperative Extension offices.

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FFA CONVENTION...in Kansas City, MO was covered by **Dick Sweeney** (WJIL/WJVO Jacksonville, IL). Special reports were fed to his stations. Dick recently returned from the International Feed Grains Conference in Budapest, Hungary where he covered the events and provided reports to his listeners. Dick says the AM and FM operations are being automated with the latest digital and computer equipment. Beginning in mid-December live inserts will be made from 6:30 a.m. to noon, and 4-6 p.m.

CONGRATULATIONS...to award winners at the 1993 National Association of Farm Broadcasters conference in Kansas City, MO, Nov. 10-14: **Ron Hays** (Oklahoma Agrinet, Oklahoma City) Farm Broadcaster of the Year; **Max Armstrong** (WGN/Tribune Networks, Chicago) TV Oscar in Agriculture; **Kathy Patton** (WIBW/Kansas Ag Network, Topeka) Radio Oscar in Agriculture; **John Harvey** (Du Pont, Wilmington, DE, retired) Meritorius Service Award.

Vic Powell
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